

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~In a communications system comprising at least two wireless service areas, each service area being operable to provide wireless communication service to a Mobile Node (MN) and being interfaced to a data network gateway, and wherein communications channels are maintained among the at least two service areas, a~~ A method for providing a connection connectivity for a Mobile Node (MN) between an MN and a data network with at least two wireless communication service areas, wherein a communications channel is provided between the at least two service areas, the method comprising the steps of:

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establishing plural communications channels via a common RF link between the 10 MN and a service area network controlling element, a first of the plural channels being arranged for connection to ~~the data network gateway interface~~ for that service area and a second of the plural channels being arranged for connection, via the communication channel[s] connecting provided between that service area with and another service area, to ~~the data network gateway interface~~ for the another service area.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of establishing plural communications channels is implemented in a network interface, and the network interface associates each established communication channel with the MN and dictates to which service area network controlling element each of the communication channels is 5 to be routed.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of establishing plural communications channels further comprises:

establishing a multiple of communication channels between the service area network controlling element and an MN in accordance with a standard being followed by

5 the communication network;

generating signaling information that associates each established channel to the MN and the service area network controlling element; and

routing the established communication channels from the service area network controlling element to the another service area based on the signaling information.

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4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein multiple data serving nodes are simultaneously accessed by routing communication channels from the service area network controlling element to a network controlling element coupled to a corresponding data serving node in the another service area.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2 where the network interface is established by an MN.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2 where the network interface is established by a network controlling element.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2 where the network interface is established by a data serving node.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein ones of the service area network controlling elements are interfaced to a data network via corresponding ones of a plurality of data serving nodes (PDSN) and comprising the additional step of:

5 performing a handoff between the service area network controlling element, and a network controlling element interfaced to a data network gateway at the another service area, whereby, during the handoff, communication channels established and accessed at the network controlling element of the another service area are routed from that network controlling element to the service area network controlling element.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 where, upon completion of the handoff, the communication channels routed between the service area network controlling element and the network controlling element of the another service area are removed and the MN communicates with the service area network controlling element
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5 via communication channels established and accessed during the handoff.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is performed in accordance with a standard being followed by the wireless communication network.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is initiated by the service area network controlling element.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is initiated by the MN.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is initiated by a data serving node coupled to the service area network controlling element.